### **Salmonellosis**

**FACT SHEET** 

#### What is salmonellosis?

Salmonellosis is a bacterial infection that usually affects the intestines and occasionally the bloodstream. It is one of the more common causes of gastroenteritis with several hundred cases occurring in Missouri each year. Most cases occur in the summer months.

## Who gets salmonellosis?

Any person can get salmonellosis, but it is identified more often in infants and children.

## How are Salmonella bacteria spread?

Salmonella bacteria are spread by direct contact with an infected person, by eating or drinking contaminated food or water or by contact with contaminated object or animal.

# What are the symptoms of salmonellosis?

People with salmonellosis may have diarrhea, cramping, fever, nausea, vomiting, and headache. Some people may have very mild or no symptoms but some infections can be quite serious, especially in the very young or elderly.

# How soon after exposure does symptoms appear?

The symptoms generally appear 12 to 36 hours after exposure but may take days.

#### Where are Salmonella bacteria found?

Salmonella bacteria are found in many places in our food chain and environment. The bacteria often contaminate raw meats, eggs, and unpasteurized milk and cheese products. Other sources may include reptiles, chicks and other fowl, dogs, cats, and farm animals.

# For how long can an infected person carry Salmonella?

A person can carry the bacteria from several days to many months. Infants and people who have been treated with oral antibiotics tend to carry the bacteria longer than others.

### Should infected people be excluded from school or work?

People with diarrhea need to be excluded from child care, food service or any other group activity where they may present a risk to others. Most infected people may return to work or school when their diarrhea stops if they carefully wash their hands after using the restroom. Food handlers, children and staff in child care settings, and health care workers must obtain the approval of the local or state health department before returning to their routine activities.

#### What is the treatment for salmonellosis?

Antibiotics for *Salmonella* are usually not recommended for uncomplicated cases. Most people with salmonellosis will recover without treatment. Some may require fluids to prevent dehydration.

### How can salmonellosis be prevented?

- The single most important way to prevent the spread of disease is careful handwashing. Wash hands thoroughly:
  - After use of restroom
  - Before preparation of foods
  - After handling raw meat
  - After completion of food preparation
  - After handling animals, especially reptiles, or their feces.
- Thoroughly cook all foods derived from animal sources.
- Refrigerate foods promptly; don't hold at room temperature any longer than necessary.
- Wash cutting boards, utensils, and food preparation counters with soap and water immediately after use.
- Cook poultry, ground beef, and eggs thoroughly before eating. Do not eat or drink foods containing raw eggs, or raw unpasteurized milk.
- Prevent cross-contamination. Never let raw meat and poultry, or their juices, come in contact with cooked meat or any other food, raw or cooked.

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